SYNOPSIS

IMPACT OF MAHATMA GANDHI NATIONAL RURAL EMPLOYMENT GUARANTEE SCHEME ON TRIBAL AND NON-TRIBAL HOUSEHOLDS IN VIZIANAGARAM DISTRICT OF ANDHRA PRADESH

By

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1. Introduction

There has been a continuous search for the most beneficial programme which can bring the rural poor households into the mainstream of the economy. After opening of the doors of Indian economy to the world by way of liberalization and globalization, there has been rapid growth. But this rapid growth has not percolated to include the rural poor into the main stream. The panacea for this is found in the programme called Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS). The huge potential of the MGNREGS has already been evident particularly in the enthusiastic participation of the local people, landless, the marginal farmers and women workers in particular, wherever information about the programme has been properly disseminated.

Many researchers have concluded that the following problems existed and caused failure of employment Programmes implemented in India so far: lack of awareness, lack of proper planning, poor quality of assets created, false muster rolls, and problems in payment, (often less than prescribed wages), disparity between wages paid to women and men, involvement of contractors in works, no comprehensive data-base, inadequate capacity of implementing agencies, no public accountability and inadequate budget allocation.

The latest employment generation programme MGNREGS has been designed to plug all these loopholes and made massive allocation and applied the people's participation, mandatory social audits and signing of muster rolls by workers. NREGA can thus be construed as a timely intervention.

2. National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA)

The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) enacted on 7th September, 2005 is a landmark legislation which empowers the rural population with the legal right to demand work. One can see the NREGA as a shift from supply side to a demand side approach. The Act aims at enhancing livelihood security of households in rural areas of the Country by providing at least 100

days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to every household which has adult members who volunteer to do unskilled manual work. On February 2, 2006 with great hope and hype, the NREGA came into force, in its first phase, covering 200 districts across the Country. The second phase beginning 2007 – 08, covered an additional 130 districts totaling to 330. The other 266 districts have been notified on 28th September, 2007 where the NREGA came into force w.e.f. 1st April, 2008. Thus fulfilling the commitment of the Government is to implement the programme in all the districts of the country. This is the largest ever public employment programme visualized in human history. The National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) was renamed as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Scheme (MGNREGS) on October 2, 2009.

3. Status of MGNREGS at All India Level

At the national level, employment was provided to 4.1 crore households in 2010-11 upto December, 2010. Women constitute 50 per cent of the total beneficiaries while Scheduled Castes accounted for 23 per cent and Scheduled Tribes 17 per cent under MGNREGS in 2010-11.Wage rates were enhanced by 17-30 per cent by linkage with Consumer Price Index for agricultural labour calculated on the basis of Rs. 100 or the actual wage rate, whichever is higher as on April 1, 2009. Around 9.38 crore accounts were opened in post offices/banks leading to their financial inclusion of water conservation, irrigation and land development accounted for over 75 per cent of works taken up in 2010-11. Over 68 lakh works taken up under MGNREGS so far.

4. Status of MGNREGS in Andhra Pradesh

The Government of Andhra Pradesh has provided employment to 52,25,287 households from the inception of the programme, and 83,28,238 individuals were provided employment of which 38,42,610 (46%) were men, 44,85,628 (54%) were women and 53,965 (0.64%) were disabled persons.

About 9 per cent of person days of employment in Andhra Pradesh to India's total have gone to members of the Scheduled Castes in 2006-07 and it increased to nearly 12 per cent in 2010 and 2.62 per cent and 1.21 per cent respectively in case of Scheduled Tribes during the same period.

The Government of Andhra Pradesh recognized early on that if corruption was to be stemmed in MGNREGS, several steps would have to be taken to plug potential sources of leakages. The State Government decided to computerize the entire process of MGNREGS with the help of Information Technology. Thus, for instance, from the process of registration to issuing of the pay order, everything is computerized and is available for scrutiny. Secondly, engineering norms have been digitized so that the discretion available to local engineers is no longer available. Payments for materials are based on fixed rates and works cannot be sanctioned unless they follow the sanctioned norms.

5. Statement of the Problem

Any mass employment programme that has the ability to enhance demand and get the economy out of the shackles of recession needs regular inspection and introspection of its execution. Many recent studies revealed that there are merits and flaws at the implementation level of the programmes and also they suggested some policy interventions for strengthening the progarammes.

It is felt that MGNREGS in its sixth year of existence should take stock of the performance of the progrmme and its outcome, at least in a sample way and come out with suggestions and approvals of the way it is implemented. An indepth study at grass roots level will give a clear picture of its impact on the beneficiaries and throw light as to how the programme can be improved further to attain its professed goal. This research is an attempt to fill up that need.

6. The Rationale for the Study

Success of the scheme depends largely on people's awareness of the programme and their active participation in the same, it is also equally important for the implementing agents like sarpanches / ward-members block development officers and other Government Officials to be aware of the key provisions and procedures of the Act, and the mechanisms of information dissemination.

Given this backdrop, it is felt that there is a need to make an appraisal of the processes and procedures of MGNREGS. This would enable us to understand and examine the institutional mechanisms under which the entire programme is being implemented. The problems and prospects of MGNREGS can then be better understood and accordingly, necessary measures can be devised to make the programme realize its set objectives. The present study thus attempts to make an appraisal of the MGNREGS processes and procedures in Vizianagaram district of Andhra Pradesh.

7. Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the Study is to identify relative merits and demerits in implementation of MGNREGS in Tribal and Non-Tribal areas and its impact on the beneficiaries.

The Specific Objectives of the Study are:

1. To examine the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the sample respondents;
2. To find out the awareness levels relating to provisions, facilities and management aspects of the MGNREGS between Tribal and Non-Tribal respondents in the Study area;
3. To know the perceptions of the sample respondents regarding the execution process of works in the Study area;

4. To analyse the impact of MGNREGS on the sample households of Tribal and Non-Tribal respondents in the Study area and
5. To draw the inferences of the Study, make suggestions and assess its implications for policy.

8. Methodology

8.1 Selection of the Study Area

The present Study selected Vizianagaram district for intensive study purposively. The rationale for selecting this particular district was that Vizianagaram district in Andhra Pradesh occupied second rank in implementing MGNREGS in India for the year 2009-10. Politicians, administrators, field staff at grass root level and people have put in hard work and concerted effort in implementing the programme which led to achieving this. As such it is found an apt target to study this district to find out what has made this programme such a great success.

The focus of the present study is to study the impact of MGNREGS works on the sample beneficiaries in Tribal and Non-Tribal mandals. While doing this, an attempt is made to study the impact at two different time points: one before the MGNREGS started and other after the commencement of MGNREGS works in the sample mandals. To analyse the changes, the households overall consumption levels are taken into consideration. The reference period of the study is 2009-10.

8.2 Type and Sources of Data

The Study used both primary and secondary data. Secondary data have been collected from the District Hand Book of Statistics, Mandal Revenue Offices, Directorate of Economics and Statistics, District Water Management Agency (DWMA) and also from Internet. For in depth research, using primary data the Study covered two mandals one a Tribal mandal and another Non-Tribal

mandal to analyse the impact of the MGNREGS programme. From each of the two mandals, four villages were selected. The Tribal mandal thus selected was Kurupam from which the villages Gotiwada, Levidi, Gunjarada and Sappa Guttili have been selected for the Study. The Non-Tribal mandal selected was Cheepurapallli from where the four sample villages are Pattikayavalasa, Mettapalli, Karlam and Devarapodilam.

8.3. Data Collection and Sampling Procedure

With regard to the collection of the primary data the following methodology has been adopted by constructing index of MGNREGS performance by selecting the following variables: per cent of job cards issued, average number of households employment provided, average number of days employed per household, percentage of SC and ST job cards, total number of works completed and percentage of households completed 100 days in each mandal and divided them into High, Medium and Low performance mandals. The study selected two mandals from medium performance category. In the medium performance category Cheepurupalli mandal, and Kurupam mandal, the former known for Non-Tribal mandal and the later represent Tribal mandal. And from each sample village 50 sample respondents were selected with the help of stratified random sampling technique to give due representation to different strata of the society. From each sample mandal 200 sample respondents were covered under the study. Thus 400 sample respondents have been selected from the eight sample villages. Information was collected through a specially designed questionnaire from all the sample respondents in the study area.

8.4 Data Analysis

The provisions, facilities, management and execution aspects of MGNREGS have been studied to assess their impact on income, consumption, outstanding loans, and agriculture and out- migration. A set of valid, reliable and

specific indicators are considered to study the impact of MGNREGS in many aspects under study which are both quantitative and qualitative indicators.

The study used SPSS extensively for making the analysis and advanced statistical technique such as Discriminant Analysis. With the help of this software, the following mentioned hypotheses are tested.

8.5 Hypotheses

The Discriminant Analysis tested the following Hypotheses:

1. In this set of analysis, the two groups (Tribal and Non-Tribal) differed in their socio-economic features in the Study area.
2. The two groups differ in drawing source of information regarding the MGNREGS.
3. The two sample groups have different levels of awareness about the provisions of MGNREGS but the awareness levels are found to be much higher in Non-Tribal respondents.
4. Awareness about facilities of MGNREGS is found to be more among Non-Tribal compared to Tribal in the Study area. Therefore, it is hypothesized that MGNREGS creates greater awareness about facilities provided in it.
5. In management aspects of MGNREGS, two groups differed but involvement of different levels of people in the implementation of MGNREGS found to be predictably more in Non-Tribal respondents.
6. Any programme will make positive impact on SHGs, agriculture and stopping out-migration. In this set of analysis the negative impact of MGNREGS on SHGs and agriculture and stopping out-migration is found to be lower in Tribal respondents compared to Non-Tribal respondents in the Study area.
7. Any rural development programme should reduce the burden of debt. Therefore, it is hypothesized that the impact of MGNREGS on borrowings is

found to be more in both the groups but this impact is more on Tribal respondents.

8. The impact of MGNREGS on consumption pattern particularly on non-food expenditure is found to be differed. It is assumed that the expenditure on non-food items like smoking, alcohol, ceremonies and education is found to be more among Non-Tribal respondents.

9. Chapterisation of the Study

The study has been divided into seven chapters.

Chapter I - Introductory Chapter Presents Background Information, Statement of the Problem, The Rationale for Appraisal, Objectives and Hypotheses of the Study.

Chapter II - Profile of the Study Area

Chapter III - Literature Review

Chapter IV - Socio- Economic Characteristics of Sample Respondents

Chapter V - Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme

- Provisions, Facilities, Management, and Execution Aspects.

Chapter VI - Impact of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme on the Sample Respondents- An Empirical Analysis

Chapter VII - Conclusion, Policy Implications and Recommendations.

10. Major Observations based on Secondary Data

According to 2011 Census (provisional) the total population of Andhra Pradesh is 846.66 lakhs with 50.21 per cent male population (425.10 lakhs) and 49.79 per cent female population (421.56 lakhs).

As per 2011 Census, the total population of Vizianagaram District is 23.43 lakhs. The male population is 11.62 lakhs (49.59%) and female population constitutes 11.81 lakhs (50.41 %). This shows that female population is higher compared to male population in the district.

The state workforce was distributed as 25.47 per cent of cultivators, 33.83 per cent agricultural labourers only 4.66 per cent in household industry and 36.04 per cent belong to other categories. In comparison to this, the Vizianagaram district had 33.15, 31.81, 3.70 and 31.34 per cent of workers in the corresponding occupations respectively in 2001 Census.

The percentage of total cropped area is considerably higher in Vizianagaram (61.16%) compared to Andhra Pradesh (50.28%) in the year 2008-09. The major crops grown in the district are paddy, sugarcane, maize, groundnut and chillies.

According to 2001 Census, the total population of Kurupam was 46714 with a male population of 23370 (50.03%) and female population of 23344 (49.97%), and it is in Cheepurupalli 58968 with a male population of 29191 (49.50%) and female population of 29777(50.50%).

11. Findings based on Field Survey

The age structure of the sample respondents between the two different samples i.e. Tribal and Non-Tribal show slight differences. About 49 per cent of the Tribal respondents fall under the age of 40 years while the Non-Tribal sample this constitutes 60 per cent. In the age group 31-60 years, the Tribal sample constitutes about 79 per cent while the Non-Tribal sample has about 63 per cent.

Between the two samples, female work participation of the Non-Tribal respondents is higher at 36.5 per cent compared to Tribal respondents at 26 per

cent. Correspondingly this means the male respondents are more (74%) in case of Tribal compared to Non-Tribal (63.5%).

Across the mandals the number of households having two workers is marginally high (64.5 %) in case of Tribal and it is 62 per cent in Non-Tribal. This analysis clearly shows that people with no or very little landholdings are only involved in the MGNREGS.

The MGNREGS works are allotted to the workers purely by the concerned field assistants and the intervention of other institutional sources is found to be negligible. Relatively higher (93.5%) number of respondents belonging to Non-Tribal is able to get work within the stipulated period compared to those of Tribal respondents (89%).

Only 73 per cent of total sample respondents completed the stipulated 100 days or more in the study area. People who have worked at least 100 days or more in the Tribal area are 95.5 per cent while this figure for the Non-Tribal areas was a shockingly low 50.5 per cent. This projects a scenario of better implementation in the Tribal areas rather than in Non-Tribal areas.

Field Assistant that plays a very vital part in getting the households registered for the MGNREGS works. Field Assistant in both the areas combined got over 68 per cent registrations while in the Tribal areas it was 92 per cent and in the Non-Tribal areas it was only 44.5 per cent.

It has been observed that due to the lower awareness levels of the respondents about medical provisions under MGNREGS, the concerned officials are not taking any special care in the implementation of the medical provisions. Though minor accidents take place at work spots during the working hours, the officials have not taken any care in providing the actual facilities. A higher number of respondents reported that proper medical care is not provided to them during the working days.

There is a political intervention in the MGNREGS works at various levels in both the sample areas, but the degree of interference is relatively small in Tribal areas compared to the Non-Tribal areas.

In the Tribal and Non- Tribal areas that more than 96 per cent and 94 per cent of the respondents felt that MGNREGS was successful in stopping out- migration.

It was found that the farm assets as well as household durables have also increased in both the sample mandals after implementation of the MGNREGS. It was identified their land-holding have increased and housing conditions improved especially in the Tribal area.

A positive change is observed in the durable items like bicycles, TVs, radios and tape recorders, sewing machines. The positive impact on the extent of household durables is found much higher in the case of Non-Tribal respondents than in Tribal respondents.

The analysis also shows that there is a net reduction in the outstanding debt towards different institutional sources. This reveals that the respondents are able to repay their outstanding debt during the financial year 2009-2010, because of their effective participation in MGNREGS works.

It is observed that consumption of food items like cereals, vegetables and oil by the respondents are increased after the execution of MGNREGS works in the study area. The consumption of non-vegetarian items also increased significantly after the implementation of MGNREGS.

The change in the consumption pattern observed after the implementation of MGNREGS in the study area revealed that there is significantly increase in the consumption of non-food items particularly expenditure on entertainment and alcohol. It was found that a large number of respondents are spending a major proportion of their earning on the unproductive aspects like ceremonies and

functions and alcohol. This suggest for emphasizing need for educate and aware the people in the interior, rural and tribal areas not to spend much portion of their earning on unproductive aspects.

The data pertaining to employment and income condition of the respondents during 2009-2010 indicates that the respondents are able to receive higher proportion of employment (112 days) and income (Rs.11213) through MGNREGS works executed in the study area. As many as, 131 days among Tribal and 93 days in case of Non-Tribal through MGNREGS works. Income received from MGNREGS Rs. 13845 for Tribal and Rs. 8460 for Non-Tribal. This shows that the income received from MGNREGS is higher among Tribal respondents. Due to increase in the alternate employment opportunities in the study area, the agricultural wages also have increased considerably. All these consequential positive changes contributed through MGNREGS ultimately caused positive impact on the employment and income conditions of the selected sample respondents in the study area.

12. The Results Based on Discriminant Analysis

For a more scientific and meaningful understanding of the factors accounting for the differences between Tribal and Non-Tribal beneficiaries of MGNREGS in Vizianagaram district under Study, Discriminant Analysis has been used to identify whether the two groups are distinct in different aspects. The results of the analysis are mentioned below.

12.1 Differences in Mean Values of Sources of Information about MGNREGS between Two Groups

The mean values of the two groups are different from each other sources of information. The mean value of neighbours is higher in Tribal sample while in respect of Non-Tribal sample, the mean values of Sarpanch, village leader and officials considerably higher.

The Mahalnobis D^2 in the model between the G - I and G - II is 0.193 and the 'F' value is 3.794 and they are significant at 1 per cent level. The classification matrix also shows that the observed classification was found to be correct by 64 per cent and 53 per cent respectively in Group-I and Group-II. This shows that the two groups are distinct from one another.

12.2 Differences in the Mean Values of Facilities of MGNREGS between Two Groups of Sample Respondents

The mean values of awareness of facilities provided in MGNREGS for the sample respondents differ between two groups but these differences are not much higher in Tribal and Non-Tribal in the Study area.

The Mahalnobis D^2 between two groups are 0.718 and the 'F' value is 10.056. The classification matrix shows that the observed classification was found to be correct by 38.00 and 93.00 per cent respectively in case of Group-I and Group-II. The mean values shows that the awareness levels of facilities provided by the MGNREGS is low for Group-I. This conforms the distinct nature of the groups under study in respect of Tribal and Non-Tribal samples in the Study area.

12.3 Differences in the Mean Values of Management Aspects of MGNREGS between Two Groups

The management aspects of MGNREGS includes four variables viz., awareness of taking Muster Roll, social audit, interference of political leaders and satisfaction of the implementation of MGNREGS. The mean values of interference of political leaders in MGNREGS works is more in Group-II compared to Group-I.

The Mahalnobis D^2 between two groups are 0.240. The 'F' value is 5.946 and is highly significant at 1 per cent level. The classification matrix of the observed and predicted was found to be correct by 72.50 per cent and 50.50 per cent in Group-I and Group-II respectively.

12.4 Differences in the Mean Values of Sources of Borrowings between Two Groups

The mean values of the two groups are different from each other with regard to the sources of borrowings in the Study area. The mean (average loan) values of the two main sources of borrowings i.e., institutional and non-institutional are considerably higher before and after MGNREGS in case of Group-II compared to Group-I. There is one common finding that the average loan has come down in both the groups after implementation of MGNREGS in the Study area. This clearly shows that MGNREGS helps to reduce the burden of loans to some extent to the rural folk.

The Mahalnobis D^2 in the model between G - I and G - II is 1.564 and the 'F' value is 38.628 and both are highly significant at 1 per cent level after the MGNREGS implementation. The classification matrix also shows that the observed classification was found to be correct by 92 per cent in Group - I and only by 61.50 per cent in Group - II.

12.5 Mean Values of Consumption Pattern between Two Groups

The consumption pattern includes six variables like, expenditure on smoking, alcohol, education, health, entertainment and ceremonies in order to understand whether the two groups really differ from each other before and after MGNREGS in the Study area. Before implementation of MGNREGS, the mean (average expenditure) values of all the six variables are higher in Group - II compared to Group-I. But the mean values of ceremonies, smoking, education and entertainment increased in Group-II while in case of Group - I, the mean values of alcohol, ceremonies, education, entertainment and health have increased after implementation of MGNREGS. This shows that the two groups are distinct from each other.

Analysing the variables before the MGNREGS, the Mahalnobis D^2 between two groups was 2.252. The 'F' value for before implementation of

MGNREGS between two groups is 36.891 and they are highly significant. The classification matrix of the observed and predicted was found to be correct by 72.00 per cent and 76.50 per cent respectively for Group-I and Group-II.

Analysing the same set of variables for the period after the MGNREGS, the Mahalnobis D^2 is 2.529 and the 'F' value is 41.42. They are highly significant at 1 per cent level after implementation of MGNREGS. The classification matrix also shows that the observed classification was found to be correct by 78.50 per cent in case of Group-I and 82.50 in Group - II.

13. The Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) Analysis

Strengths

- During the year 2009-10 MGNREGS emerged as the most important source of employment and income generating programme in the study area.
- MGNREGS led to reduction in the outstanding debts of the respondents after their participation in MGNREGS works.
- The concerned officials active participation at all levels led to the successful implementation of MGNREGS in the study area.
- Out-migration has been reduced to a great extent because of their participation in MGNREGS.
- There is significantly positive effect in accumulation of farm assets and household durables in the study area.
- MGNREGS has indirectly benefited the workers by way of a hike in the agriculture and non-agriculture wages to the tune of Rs. 100 to 150 daily.

Weaknesses

- The medical provisions under MGNREGS are not being implemented by the concerned officials.
- The concerned officials are not able to provide the required tools and implements to the workers to execute their works effectively.

- Lack of proper supervision by the officials led to impersonification of job cards. It is found that unregistered persons are working on the job cards of registered workers.
- It is found that in some cases there is miscalculations of the value of piece rate of works attended by the workers, Due to illiteracy the workers are not able to estimate the actual value of the attended piece rate of works.
- It is unfortunate that higher proportion of the earnings under MGNREGS works is being diverted towards consumption of alcohol and other intoxicants by the workers.
- The concerned officials of MGNREGS in the study area are also not extending the facilities like employment allowance and providing Aya to the children of working women.

Opportunities

The MGNREGS has provided an opportunity to the rural poor to improve their livelihoods. These people have got some amount of income security that led to the food security and helped reduce poverty. This economic opportunity is leading to the spread of social awareness and security to women, children and socially disadvantaged sections.

Threats

One of the greatest threats of MGNREGS is the scarcity of labour for agricultural operations. Even though the MGNREGS works are taken up during January to June, there will be some agricultural operations for which labour will not be available. Even if they are available, the labour demands higher wages. Thus the major threat of the employment scheme is increase in the cost of cultivation. Since most of the farmers are small and marginal, they cannot afford to bear the increased costs.

14. Suggestions

The Following Policies are suggested based on Analysis and Results of the Study.

- Female work participation rates in the study area are observed very low. Male work participation and the resultant income is being spent on alcohol, smoking, etc. As such for the welfare of the family/ household female work participation needs to be raised.
- In the study area particularly in Non-Tribal area it was found that the stipulated 100 days of work was not provided to the beneficiaries thereby not reaching the main goal of MGNREGS. The administrators should take proper measures by way of identifying works and the times to implement those programmes with care.
- Field Assistant (FA) is the key person for the successful implementation of MGNREGS. However, in the study area it was found that Field Assistants are not involved at the level of expectations. The administrators should take proper action to see that the FAs are involved in the programme.
- One of the key provisions of the MGNREGS such as medical facilities at the work sites has not been implemented in the study area. This results which could easily be prevented. This should be treated as a most important facility which will help rise the health status of the society in general.
- MGNREGS by nature is a demand driven programme. Political interference actually debases the notion of demand thereby leading to benefits to unscrupulous persons. This will defeat the main goal of the programme. The policy makers should devise a way to limit the political involvement in the implementation of the programme.
- It was found that the MGNREGS programme is coming in conflict of the agricultural operations. The main problem is unavailability of labour for agricultural operations in the seasons. As should be devised in such a way that they are implemented during other than agricultural season.

- In districts like Vizianagaram, where agriculture is mostly rain fed, the MGNREGS policy should be flexible and increase the number of days of work depending on the agricultural seasons.
- There is a wide gap between rural and urban wages of Rs. 150 to Rs. 200 depending on the nature and timing of the work. Hence, it is necessary to hike the wage rate.

General Observations Based on Field Study

- Since large number of women in the reproductive age group are coming forward to work in MGNREGS, the worst hit are infants and young children who are left behind in the houses. The 'Aaya' facility is not popular nor are there facilities at the work site for such a facility. Perhaps strengthening Anganwadi Centres is one alternative and they should be converted into crèches.
- For programme like MGNREGS, proper planning, effective implementation, close monitoring and independent evaluation are the key instruments for delivering maximum benefits to the target group. The MGNREGS in Andhra Pradesh is doing very well in all these aspects. Data are made available on the web, policy is flexible and monitoring is effective. Instead of a large number of officials, Gram Panchayats may be given more powers for effective supervision.
- MGNREGS may be extended to educated youth (post metric) for mobilizing them in creating social awareness about literacy, health care, AIDS, sanitation, drinking water, balanced nutrition, anti-liquor, family planning and care of the child and aged.